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chapitres où, avec une clarté toute cartésienne, les notions sont cernées dans leur histoire et dans leur contenu. Malgré des coquilles orthographiques irritantes, il reste une introduction intéressante au plus singulier des *darśana*'s indiens.

J. M. Verpoorten

GOOSSAERT, Vincent: *The Taoists of Peking, 1800–1949: A Social History of Urban Clerics*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007. 395 pp., ISBN 978-0-674-02505-9.

For decades, studies of late-imperial Chinese Taoist monastic and lay communities have not received much attention, neither from domestic scholars, nor from their Western counterparts. With his article “Dimensions of Tang Taoism: The State of the Field at the End of the Millennium”, Dr. Russell Kirkland has helped to bring some clarity as to the reasons behind this phenomenon. He argues that two factors most likely contributed to this situation: “partly because of Confucian and modern antipathy toward monasticism, and partly because of the paucity of pertinent sources”.¹ Though this is particularly true for studies of Tang monastic communities, the author argues that the shortage of sources is not the primary cause for this neglect. Instead, a false dichotomy between “classical Taoism” and “religious” Taoism has long clouded the perspective of modern scholars and sinologists. This biased view towards Taoism grew, in part, out of the impact of the early Jesuit missionaries as well as the Protestant missionaries of the 19th century. Further, the roots of this misunderstanding lie deep in the perception of the Chinese themselves (especially those Confucian scholars who studied in Europe and America during the late 19th and the early 20th centuries).² Through the influence of those Christian missionaries and secular scholars, Western and Chinese people began to attribute validity only to the Confucian educational system in imperial China. Meanwhile, Taoists were increasingly characterized as a superstitious and uneducated mass who worshiped idols, practiced spirit writing and engaged in fortune telling. This bias eventually grew into the sweeping assertion that this group of people had not produced any benefit for the welfare of the common people, whether in Chinese political, economic or cultural life.

1 KIRKLAND, 1997–1998: 91.

2 For more information about this discussion, please refer to CLARKE, 2000.

It was not until the end of the 20th century that this prejudice began to change. Ever since then, a growing number of scholars have begun to give more careful attention to the study of the *Daozang*, Taoist history, and other Taoist literature. Further, these scholars have also been actively pursuing critical field research that has helped to draw a more comprehensive picture of Taoism as a whole as well as of the real daily lives of Taoists. Vincent Goossaert's 2007 work, *The Taoists of Peking, 1800–1949: A Social History of Urban Clerics*, emerged as a pioneering work for the study of the late imperial Chinese Taoist communities. In terms of sources, the long-running restricted view of the Taoist monastic communities could be traced to a habitual Western dependence on the work of three particular Japanese scholars.³ In contrast, Dr. Goossaert used a large number of first-hand materials (historical archives and stone inscriptions) to exhibit a fascinating perspective on this “special group of people's lives” during a period of dramatic changes in the capital city of late imperial China.

Dr. Goossaert is one of the most recognized sinologists in Western academia. His research interest lies in the social history of Chinese religions, especially the Taoist history of late imperial and modern China. He received his Ph.D from the École Pratique des Hautes Études and, from there, went on to teach at the the University of Paris. He currently serves as the Deputy Director of the Groupe Sociétés, Religions, Laïcités (Societies-Religions-Secularism Institute, a research unit of the EPHE-CNRS) and is currently overseeing an international research project called “Temples, Urban Society, and Taoists”.⁴ Dr. Goossaert has written several books and published a large number of academic papers in French, English and Chinese.⁵

In the introduction to his book, Dr. Goossaert asserts that the primary focus of his research is on the “ordinary” clerics of the Taoist communities and that he approaches the subject matter from a social-historical perspective. His stated objective is that, “by looking at the lives and activities of Peking Taoists like Wang, I want to explore how Taoists lived, thriving or surviving in the tumultuous times of pre-Communist China” (p. 3). According to the author, there were

3 Koyanagi Shikita 小柳司氣太 (1870–1940) edited and published *Baiyun guan zhi* 白雲觀志 (1934); Yoshioka Yoshitoyo 吉岡義豊 (1916–1979), though he did not write a book about Taoism, wrote the influential *Taoist Monastic Life*; and Igarashi Kenryu 五十嵐賢隆, who had spent some time in Taiqing gong 太清宮 in Shenyang 瀋陽, published a book about its history and Taoist daily life.

4 <<http://www.gsrl.cnrs.fr/taoist-and-temple/spip.php%3Farticle27&lang=en.html>> (last visited January 24 2012).

5 For another important book of his, see GOOSSAERT, 2000.

two principal ideas that gave shape to this area of focus: firstly, he suggests that Taoism is an important part of Chinese history and claims that, without giving attention to the role and contributions of Taoist clerics, it is difficult to obtain an accurate account of historical Taoism and, by extension, China itself. Secondly, he aims at rectifying the long-running biases against Taoist clerics among not only scholarly circles (Western and Chinese), but also within the “popular conception”. Goossaert strives to accomplish these goals by adopting a new scientific research method – a social-historical approach to religion as a profession in China. The author carefully delineates a well-rounded picture of the lives and activities of Taoist clerics of Peking from the late imperial period to the founding of the People’s Republic of China. Through this portrayal, the reader can see that these clerics were neither socially despised nor uneducated, but they were active participants in the religious economy of the city.

Goossaert divides his work into three parts. The first chapter of part one sketches three contexts, institutional, social and political, in which Peking Taoists lived. This descriptive introduction is very important because it gives the reader detailed information about how the clerics from the two major Taoist orders or lineages, Zhengyi 正一 and Quanzhen 全真, were trained and ordained, how the clerics interacted with the lay communities and how the Chinese state used the administrative organs (such as the Daolu si 道錄司 and the Zhangyi si 掌儀司) to control the clerics and their activities.

The general thrust of the book’s first part also helps prepare the reader to understand the comprehensive sociological profile of the Peking Taoists, which is the focus of the second major part of the work. This section occupies the main body of the book and contains four chapters. Dr. Goossaert claims that “the Taoist clergy active in late imperial and Republican Peking can be divided into five categories: the Baiyun guan monks, the court Taoists, the eunuch-monks, the temple clerics and the mendicants and outside visitors” (p. 83). This division is appropriate for that particular time. Chapters two to five deal mainly with these five groups of clerics. Chapter two, focusing on the Taoist temple clergy, explores these clerics’ social background, lineages and gender. Goossaert also explains here how these clerics were trained and ordained while touching upon other activities and the incomes of temple clerics. Lastly, the author analyzes the role of the temple manager and the practices pertaining to succession within this position. Chapter three centers on one of the most important monasteries for Quanzhen monks, Baiyun guan (the White Cloud Abbey), its history, layout, the abbots and other dignitaries, daily life in the monastery, liturgical programs and other aspects of its operation. Chapter four provides vital information about the

personnel of the Baiyun guan: its leadership as well as the interactions between the abbots of the Baiyun guan (e.g. Gao Rentong 高仁峒) and the late Qing imperial court. Goossaert also gives a full description of the dramatic death of An Shilin 安世霖 (the Baiyun guan's last abbot before 1949), an event about which contemporary Taoist monks are reluctant to speak. The author, in chapter five, deals with a very interesting phenomenon in Chinese Taoist history – the unique roles of the court chaplains and eunuch-monks. Though Dr. Goossaert does provide some hypotheses as to why these eunuchs chose to become Taoist monks or priests when they retired from the imperial court (additionally, the possible relationship between Huoshan pai 霍山派 and Quanzhen pai 全真派), this fascinating phenomenon still warrants further exploration.

The book's third and final part, containing two chapters, focuses on the social roles of Peking Taoists. The liturgical functions of the Taoist clergy are the main subject matter of chapter six. Here, Dr. Goossaert explores several facets of Taoist services provided by clerics, such as non-ritual services, liturgical services, death rituals and communal rituals. In the following chapter, the author probes the transmission of Taoist teachings and self-cultivation techniques which were believed to lead to salvation and transcendence. This chapter also offers accounts of those Taoist clerics who did not stay in the monasteries, such as Liu Mingrui 劉明瑞 (a Neidan 內丹 master), and a new type of master, Zhao Bichen 趙避塵 (1860–1942). The author, at this point, gives concerted attention to a number of Taoist redemptive societies such as *Wanguo daode hui* 萬國道德會, *Yiguan dao* 一貫道, *Xiantian dao* 先天道 and *Zaili jiao* 在理教. Dr. Goossaert could greatly supplement this work by providing more detailed information about the complicated relations between these groups and Taoist communities.

Finally, in his Conclusion, Dr. Goossaert disputes the view that modern Taoism's history is a case of religious decline. This is important not only because he challenges some Daoist specialists' understanding of late imperial Taoism but also provides people a new perspective on the realities of Daoism in modern China.

In general, this book is extremely important for the study of late imperial Taoism. It breaks new ground in the field of Chinese religion by providing a new perspective with which to more accurately examine the Taoists, their lives, their religious vocation and their roles in the Taoist and social contexts. The focus of this book is not Taoist thought; it is about the social history of Taoist clerics in Peking. By looking more closely at this group through Dr. Goossaert's social-historical lens, both Taoists and lay practitioners now can have a better

understanding of their identities and their roles. For scholars, this account affords a perspective unlike that of other books in that Dr. Goossaert incorporates a large amount of primary source material (archival records, Peking inscriptions, etc). It was his rich field research experience in China in combination with his regular interactions with the insiders of the Taoist communities that enabled Goossaert to make this unique, definitive imprint on this area of study.

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GUHE, Eberhard: *Einführung in das klassische Sanskrit*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2008. 2008. XXI + 287 pp., ISBN 978-3-4470-5807-0.

The handbook of Sanskrit grammar by Eberhard Guhe (2008) seems to be a continuation of the fine tradition of nearly every generation of German indologists having an improved version of A. Stenzler's famous *Elementarbuch der Sanskritsprache* grammar, published for the first time in 1869 and reaching its 18th edition in 1995. Stenzler's grammar was a concise descriptive grammar that was read not only by generations of German indologists but also translated to several other European languages. In his introduction, E. Guhe also mentions another of his main sources, namely, G. Bühler's *Leitfaden für den Elementarcursus des Sanskrit* of 1981 (first edition 1883), which was the first popular work in the European tradition of Sanskrit grammars in the form of handbooks with step-by-step learning rather than descriptive grammars.